

Major Dickinson a Man Who Eats for a Living

Uncle Sam's Official Dinner Host Has Sat at a Hundred Banquets Since Taking Post, and Boasts He Can Still Look a Demitasse in the Face

By MARY CRAIG.

HOW would you like to eat for a living? Sounds like a sinecure, doesn't it?

Well, it isn't a bit. Take it from one now engaged in the gentle art of eating his way from coast to coast, there are times when the very mention of a menu creates a desire to use all exits.

Major J. J. Dickinson is the official dinner host of the United States of America. Whenever Uncle Sam wants to entertain somebody he sends for the Major, who forthwith goes out on a still hunt for vintage wines and what goes with them.

"By the way, where are you dining to-night?" says Uncle Sam to the distinguished visitor.

"Er—no place in particular," says the guest.

"Good," says Uncle Sam. "You must have dinner with our Major Dickinson, guaranteed to have more ideas on food, humor and pathos than Donald Brian has mash notes. After an evening with my entertainer de luxe you will marvel how you ever came to waste the price of a ticket at any calculated place of amusement. Come to-morrow evening and bring plenty of laughs with you."

To-morrow arrives, and with it Mr. Guest. He is prepared for a treat, and he finds Major Dickinson. He recognizes his host by the gardenia in his button-hole and the cloak of hospitality thrown rakishly over his shoulders. What need to spread out the welcome mat with a so glad you are here smile like that?

"How in the name of all that's lucky did the owner of the so expansive smile happen to pluck the host plum from the official tree?" you are wondering.

Sombody wondered the same thing out loud to Mr. William "Runnings" Bryan once, and he gladly took unto himself all the glory accruing from the appointment.

"The Major was one of the fleet of newspaper men who cruised cross-country with me on my Presidential campaigns," explained the Sir Thomas Lip-ton of politics. "When I entered the Wilson Cabinet it became incumbent on me to select an ideal host for our official visitors. I remembered the Major was a shade the best winer, diner and spinner of yarns I had ever been privileged to know. Aside from his positive genius at keeping the cup of good cheer bubbling and brimming, he had become a very warm personal friend of myself and the entire Bryan family. The Department of State needed an official entertainer. It was a position where personality must predominate. The answer was—Major Dickinson."

Major Dickinson is fortunate in that he does not have to make up for the part. He is all the things expected of a typical American host, including more than six feet of height, shoulders like the illustrations in the six best sellers, hair drifted with the snow of life and

knowledge, a laugh that comes from away down and a beautiful scorn of polite patter.

"I've sat in at high unto a hundred banquets since my inauguration as official host and I can still look a demitasse in the face without flinching," declared the Major recently when friends began to fear for the future of his digestive apparatus.

"How do I account for this evidence of a galvanized, cast iron, steel tempered system? Simplest thing you know. I am the man behind the menu. I have made them good American meals, not Lucullan orgies. Whether the honor guest of the evening is a Russian diplomat here on a grave secret of State or just a plain citizen with an idea makes no difference with the menu or the wine list.

"Apropos of wine lists, a certain English nobleman known to possess one of the oldest and coldest wine cellars extant recently partook of the hospitality of the Department of State. Knowing him to be considerable of a connoisseur I was a bit nervous over the contents of the bottles at his disposal. It was impossible to meet him on his own ground. The only thing to do was to spring something different.

"The evening chosen for the dinner was hot, as only mid-July nights can be. Very well. The something different must be refreshing and cooling. True to his teachings the Englishman showed a fine discrimination in his choice of wines.

"Beg pardon, but would you mind telling me what that jolly long drink is?" he asked, indicating my glass.

"With pleasure. That is an orange blossom," I replied, trying not to show that the bait had been placed where he would nibble. "Do you mean to tell me you have never tasted an American orange blossom?"

"For my honor, I have not," pushing the vintage wine aside in his enthusiasm at having discovered a new drink. "I should like to try one if you don't mind."

"For the remainder of the evening the vintage wine went begging. Johnny Bull gave himself over to the demolishing of orange blossoms.

"As I alighted at my hotel after having said my adieu there is no denying the fact I was particularly well pleased with myself over the incident of the orange blossoms. Just then a taxicab whirled up to the curb and a very excited Englishman leaped out.

"Beg pardon, Major," he spluttered, but I've been chasing you for thirty blocks. Sorry to be such a bother, really, but would you mind telling me how you managed that delightful American drink you introduced this evening?"

"Tall shell glass well frosted; juice of half a lemon; juice of half an orange; jigger of gin; sugar to taste. Stir well, round out the glass with mineral water and repeat until all symptoms of thirst have vanished. Jigger of gin may be omitted."

"You don't tell me. Perfectly simple, is it not? I shall have to introduce the orange blossom ova hah."

"I hope he made good on the resolution. Anyhow, he destroyed my faith in ancestral wine cellars. Can you

blame me, when a simple little soda fountain drink was made to take the place for a whole evening?"

Major Dickinson believes the time when dinner guests were made to endure through twelve courses and gorge themselves into poignant misery is gathering dust on the rear shelf along with straight front corsets and padded shoulders. Simplicity is the thing.

"We have learned to judge a dinner on a basis of quality rather than quantity," is the way the official diner views the food situation. "A garish display of food is considered as vulgar as a like display of jewels. We are emulating the epicure who gets as much enjoyment from a single bite of his favorite dish as the gourmand does from an entire plateful."

"It is a mistake to think we must cater to the foreign palate when we are entertaining a guest from another part of the world. It cost me many a half hour of futile effort and vain misgiv-

ings to learn this fact. A potentate from far off India drove it home with a vim.

"I had been scurrying around for a week on the lookout for a real Indian chef to prepare curry in true native fashion. At last I succeeded. Oh, the chef was real all right. He had not been here long enough to exchange his turban for a 50 cent felt.

"When the curry was placed before Mr. Potentate I knew how Napoleon felt at Austerlitz. But not for long. Pride tripped on the top step and landed in a heap at the bottom. Calmly looking the curry over the while, this was the potentate's comment:

"Before returning to my country there is a curiosity I must gratify. One of your Americans came over to Bombay to engage in business. He prospered greatly, but there was never a week passed he did not declare he would give the little finger off his right hand for a large platter of corn beef and cabbage. I want to go back and tell him I dined on corn beef and cabbage."

"And I had spent the better part of two days searching for Indian curry!"

"The good old American dishes go big with our foreign guests. Not many fruits and furbelows, either. They like to think of us as an elemental people not very far removed from the soil. We are supposed to be more interested in industries than in the art of eating well. That is why we go in for quiet dinners rather than extravagant feasts at our official entertainments. Stuffing and guzzling are out of fashion, if indeed they were ever in.

"In most dining places of distinction it is no longer necessary to guard against flagrant food when ordering a dinner. The most satisfactory results are obtained by stating the number of persons to be served and the total amount allowed for the dinner, including table decorations.

"That such procedure is by no means infallible was proved not long ago when a Mexican envoy was the guest of the U. S. A. at dinner.

"What decorations would you suggest, sir?" asked the steward to whom I had left the dinner.

"The occasion seemed to demand as much patriotism as could be managed without resorting to spread-eagle methods.

"American Beauties," I replied, hoping our Mexican visitor would get the allusion. "Go as far as you like up to \$10 a plate. Places for ten."

"Now it happened the steward was a 'buck' on the Mexican situation. He would willingly have seen our army march across the border, take Mexico by the scruff of the neck and kick her right off the map.

"On the evening of the dinner I arrived at the club early. The steward was waiting for me. He was puffed with pride. He had achieved a triumph in table decoration. Would I be pleased to step into the dining room and take a preprandial peek? I would.

"Imagine my concern to find at least \$50 worth of American Beauties with fifty yards of red, white and blue streamers, the piece de resistance, an American flag, surmounting the whole. And it was to be a pipe of peace dinner too!"

"After despatching every available messenger to beg, borrow or steal all the red and yellow ribbon in sight and to get a Mexican flag regardless of effort or expense, I passed an uncomfortable half hour hoping there was a block in the traffic or that the envoy carried a leaky tube on his motor's off hind wheel. Soon the first messenger returned to report a couple of yards of ribbon. It was used where it would make the best showing.

"A few seconds later the envoy drove in sight. He was not a particularly happy looking guest at best. If only one of those boy scouts captured a Mexican flag the day would be saved. Distress signals were being wigwagged from the direction of the dining room. From my conversation the envoy must have decided I was suffering an attack of mental miasma.

"When there seemed no longer any excuse for delay I suggested going in to dinner. Simultaneously the high signs of victory were flashed. The Mexican

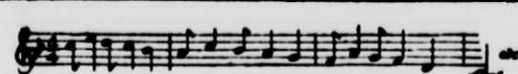
It is said the Brazilian Maxixe is going to flood our ballrooms this winter. Very possibly, if we may judge by its success at places like Dinard and Deauville, says the *Bystander*. At any rate, it would offer an agreeable contrast to the ugly rowdiness of most one steps, and the rather suggestive, though graceful, monotony of the tango.

As a matter of fact, the Brazilian Maxixe is, in a sense, allied to the tango, for both the rhythm of the music and the idea of some of the steps are not dissimilar. But it is more energetic, and let the chaperons take heart again!—the one dancer does not cling to the other, as the ivy to the tree.

Indeed, the characteristic of this new dance is extended movement, and that will, perhaps, militate against its success. For the dancers of it require a good deal of space—which is just the thing most difficult to obtain in the modern ballroom.

However, as the Brazilian Maxixe is so pretty, and as not even the most prurient could consider it objectionable, it will be a great pity if we do not make an effort to acclimatize it in London.

On its first demonstration in New York the Brazilian Maxixe jumped into popular favor, and is now being danced at almost all of the restaurants and dance palaces in the city. Its many graceful steps and positions are pretty without being improper, and the new dance is sure to enjoy a much longer period of popularity with dancers than any of the other tangos, waltzes or turkey trots.



Rhythm of the Brazilian Maxixe.

HOW LONDON DANCES THE MAXIXE.



HOW NEW YORK DANCES THE MAXIXE. Delerio and Luis dancing the Brazilian Maxixe at Palais de Danse.

Septuagenarians Who Can Out-Turkey Trot Their Grandchildren



These remarkably graceful dancers, Col. Marc Diamond and Mme. Arina De Laware, appear at the Jardin de Danse in a series of dances demonstrating the terpsichorean art of decades ago and the turkey trots, tangos and waltzes of to-day. Col. Diamond is more than 70 years of age and up to a few years ago, when he retired, enjoyed a reputation as a successful portrait painter.

flag was mingling its folds with those of Old Glory atop the bank of American Beauties.

"All's well," I thought.

"But all was not well. Some one was mightily mixed on national emblems. Instead of the eagle and snake of Mexico there was the dragon of China fluttering gayly in the breeze of the electric fan.

"You got me wrong, steward," I apologized, lifting both flags from the flowers and handing them to the astonished waiter. "This is a cactus and castanet party, not a chop suey affair."

"No more patriotic outbursts for me, except under special supervision. My mission is to promote peace, not war."

If you are lucky enough to meet Major Dickinson in one of his convivial moments, which is pretty much all the time, he will surely invite you to try a Bryan cocktail.

What is a Bryan cocktail? A Bryan cocktail is the unfermented juice of the grape, frapped, with a Maraschino cherry at the bottom. It was invented by Major Dickinson and dedicated to Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan, the man who made grape juice famous. The Major believes the silver tongued one is the greatest man since Lincoln. Listen to him a

while and he will have you believing the same thing.

By the way, the Major holds the record for donning a dinner coat. When it comes to time he can make a fireman dressing for a big blaze look like a loafer.

Eating for a living isn't such a hateful job after all.

Lingo of Locality

IT is probable that only the drummers really know how many types of vernacular are used in this country and which are the favorite pastimes, for the average man is confused by those which come to his attention in even a short journey.

If he leaves the Grand Central station, for instance, and rides in the smoking car he may be asked to take a hand at bridge before the train has pulled out of the subterranean cavity at Forty-second street. But he need not expect that a similar invitation will reach him after he has left that train at the South station in Boston, walked a few blocks and boarded another train at the North station. From there on the suggestion will be phrased "Play pitch? Play pitch?" and the word bridge won't be heard. And those who have experi-

mented affirm that pitch is the deadly r game of the two, at least for the novice.

Should your footstep give out almost anywhere in the United States except in one little corner you will tell the cobbler that you want your shoes half soled and heeled. But do not make the mistake of using that phrase in the New England region devoted to the pursuit of the frisky mackerel and the somnolent cod, for the shoemaker won't know what you mean. The proper phrase to use thereabouts is "heeled and tapped."

Why tapped? Why, because that is a relic of the time when a sewed sole was unknown and the cobbler tapped, tapped all day long with his little hammer on the wooden pegs that held the shoe together.

Possibly you are not yet so bitten by speed mania but you still enjoy driving across country behind a good horse. If you get up near the Canadian line you will seek in vain for a livery stable in case you wish to put up over night. What you must ask for thereabouts is a baiting stable, for horses are still "baited and bedded" in that part of the country, just as they were a hundred years ago.

Even the expletives vary, and that mildest one of all, the "by golly" of the Southern negro has been transmuted into "by gorry."